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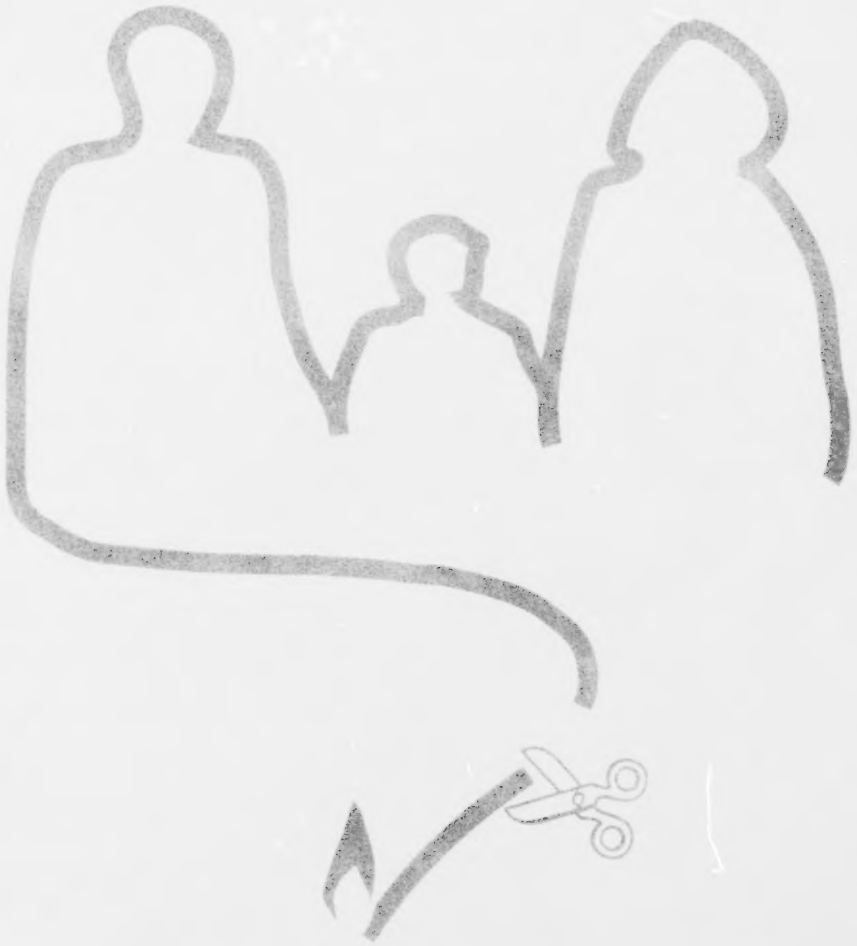

Canada

DISCUSSION PAPER:

WIFE BATTERING AND THE WEB OF HOPE: PROGRESS, DILEMMAS AND VISIONS OF PREVENTION

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The views expressed in this paper are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the official views of Health and Welfare Canada

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

PREFACE i

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY ii

1. **INTRODUCTION: A REVIEW OF OUR PROGRESS** 1

2. **DILEMMAS IMPLICIT IN PROGRESS** 2

3. **THE UNANTICIPATED CONSEQUENCES OF PROGRESS** 4

4. **THE UNEXPECTED CONTRADICTIONS IMPLICIT IN OUR PRACTICAL SOLUTIONS** 5

5. **THE QUESTIONS WHICH CHALLENGE OUR PROGRESS TO PREVENTION** 7

6. **THE WEB OF HOPE** 8

7. **PERSPECTIVES ON PREVENTION** 8

    7.1 The Ecological Perspective 8
    7.2 Reshaping Values 9
    7.3 Community Development 9

8. **BUILDING AN ACTION PROGRAM FOR PREVENTION** 9

    8.1 Community Development 9
    8.2 Changing Values 10
    8.3 Research 11
    8.4 Changing Service Perspectives 11
    8.5 Prevention Through Individual Support 11

9. **CONCLUSION** 12

10. **FACT SHEET: WIFE BATTERING** 13
    INCIDENCE

    10.1 Early Estimates of Incidence 13
    10.2 More Recent Estimates 13
    10.3 U.S. Estimates 14
    10.4 Homicide Statistics 14

11. **BRIEFING NOTE: WIFE BATTERING** 15
    PRIMARY PREVENTION

    11.1 The Context: Value Change and Prevention 15
    11.2 Orientation and Components of a Preventive Strategy 16
    11.3 Progress in Prevention 17
    11.4 Are Preventive Programs Successful in Changing Values? 18
    11.5 Impediments to Further Progress in Prevention 19

12. **FACT SHEET: WIFE BATTERING** 20
    COORDINATING COMMITTEES

12.1 The Need for Coordinating Committees 20
12.2 The Growth of Coordinating Efforts 20
12.3 Issues 21

13. BRIEFING NOTE: WIFE BATTERING 23
THE ROLE OF THE JUSTICE SYSTEM

13.1 Background 23
13.2 Recent Progress in the Justice Response to Wife Battering 24
13.3 Issues 26

14. BRIEFING NOTE: WIFE BATTERING 28
THE SPECIAL CHALLENGES OF WOMEN WHO ARE DOUBLY ISOLATED

14.1 The Context 28
14.2 Women in Rural and Isolated Areas 28
14.3 Immigrant and Visible Minority Battered Women 30
14.4 Official Language Minority Women 33
14.5 Disabled Women 33

15. BRIEFING NOTE: WIFE BATTERING 36
SHELTERING

15.1 Background: The Importance of the Sheltering Movement 36
15.2 Sheltering Options 36
15.3 The Growth of Shelters 37
15.4 Issues: Through the Eyes of Shelter Workers: Current Threats to the Sheltering Movement 38
15.5 Concerns for the Future/Concluding Questions 39

16. BRIEFING NOTE: WIFE BATTERING 41
BEYOND SHELTERING

16.1 Background 41
16.2 The Need for a Broad Service Base 41
16.3 Progress: The Increased Involvement of Health, Spiritual and Social Service Professionals 42
16.4 Progress: Follow-up and Support Services Offered by Shelters 43
16.5 Progress: Community Support Groups 44
16.6 Progress: Increase in the Number of Crisis Intervention Teams 44
16.7 Issues Impeding Further Progress 45

17. BRIEFING NOTE: WIFE BATTERING 46
PROGRAMS FOR MEN WHO BATTER

17.1 Background: A Brief History 46
17.2 Description of the Programs 46
17.3 Changing Directions 47
17.4 Characteristics of Men Who Batter 48
17.5 Issues 48
17.6 Future Directions 49

18. FACT SHEET: WIFE BATTERING 51

HUSBAND ABUSE

18.1 Introduction 51
18.2 The Debate 51
18.3 Supporting Research 52

PEOPLE INTERVIEWED IN THE PREPARATION OF THIS DOCUMENT 54

FEDERAL GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS 54
PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS 55
NON-GOVERNMENT CONTACTS 55

PREFACE

This paper was written by one person, but created by forty. It was conceived to help address and perhaps partly dissipate through dialogue, the frustrations so many people working to prevent violence against women in the home are currently experiencing. It is an amalgamation of the hopes, concerns, observations and predictions of forty people working within and outside government at the federal and provincial/territorial levels, who kindly agreed to philosophize with me about the issue of wife battering and to offer informed opinions on our progress to date as well as the paths we should now explore.

This paper answers few questions. It raises many more. It reveals that many people working in the area of wife battering today are at a creative impasse. We have come far in our crisis responses, but these successes seem to lead us no nearer to our ultimate goal of prevention, and some speculate, may even be blocking our progress toward ending violence against women.

My thanks to all who agreed to share their ideas with me for this paper. I trust I have not misrepresented your thoughts in my synthesis of this rich material. I hope you will find the paper stimulating, but if, on reading it, you find the questions and dilemmas raised overwhelming as Ann Tweddle, one of the people interviewed for this paper, reminds us:

> "We won't move forward if we have all the answers and none of the questions."

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Progress:

The 1980's have been years of significant progress in the field of wife battering:

- number of emergency shelters increased more than 400% to a total of over 300;
- Canada was the first country in the world to institute nation-wide police charging policies against men who batter;
- many services have or are developing protocols to deal more effectively with the crisis of wife battering;
- government funding for shelter spaces has grown, particularly at the federal level;
- in some provinces, sensitization workshops are available for judges to increase their knowledge of program options and the implications of this form of violence for women, their families, men who batter and for the wider society;
- public education is a priority for most services and governments;
- there are over 100 programs for men who batter as a response to the need for treatment and/or sanctions;
- Canada's overall response to this issue has brought international recognition and energy to those who strive toward solutions;
- the number and quality of training programs have increased.

The Dilemmas:

The rapid progress in crisis responses to wife battering in the first half of this decade, has created several dilemmas.

- It has raised expectations among women who are battered, and among members of the general public, without always providing services and results to meet these expectations.
- Continuing progress has shown us that one-dimensional solutions will not prevent wife battering, and that we cannot expect easy or quick solutions to this multi-dimensional problem.
- There is some indication that the public and policy makers feel they have done all they can to address the problem and are losing momentum.

- There are fears among advocates that some people working in the field have become so committed to the services they provide that they have lost some of the perspective and flexibility needed for change.

- Women are still suffering the secondary victimization experienced when they look for help in institutions and agencies not sensitive to their problems and needs.

In the attempt to deal with and understand the overwhelming enormity of the problem of preventing wife battering, many people working around wife battering have lost their direction.

As a society, we are living through the same dilemma of apparent choice experienced by women who are battered, where no choice has a clear, predictable or necessarily rational outcome.

The Unanticipated Consequences of Expanded Expectations and Definitions of Wife Abuse:

Increased understanding of the issue in combination with growing expectations of existing services and pressure to create new ones is testing our ability to manage the process of change effectively.

- Recognition of the complexity of the issue has led to broader funding priorities but at the same time, the risk of fragmented service delivery and narrowed visions of change.

- Conceptualizing and planning longterm goals to address the fundamental nature of Wife Abuse has proven to be as complex and overwhelming as the issue itself.

The Unexpected Contradictions Implicit in our Practical Solutions:

Despite dissatisfaction with some of the action taken recently, there is little movement toward alternatives because of the widespread uncertainty about what the optimum direction for future action should be.

- While there is widespread recognition that wife battering is a crime, there is evidence that the majority of battered women would not seriously consider using the criminal justice system and that some police are concerned about the potential for escalating the seriousness of the violence by contributing to the man's feelings of loss of control when charges are laid.

- Workers in different services are attempting to work towards greater integration and co-ordination of services but at the same time are also competing with each other for funding.

- In treatment strategies, there is a concern that while family oriented approaches may address the multi-dimensionality of the problem, individual women's needs may be overlooked.

- While the ideal of prevention is widely supported, funding for prevention is not consistently available nor are priorities well established.

- At a time when the understanding of the complexity of Wife Abuse is growing, there is a trend to replace people with needed expertise and sensitivity to the issue with generic managers in government, social and health service and even front-line agencies and programs.

Essential Questions:

Unanticipated consequences and contradictions in existing and emerging approaches are frustrating the common goal of preventing Wife Abuse. A number of questions surround attempts to move to the next stage of progress.

Policy: Are we inadvertently imposing even more control over women and taking away their choices in our attempts to help them?

Attitudes: Are we changing outward behaviour but not really affecting underlying values?

Treatment: How can we protect the right of the individual to confidentiality and at the same time promote information sharing across agencies? How can we coordinate services within and across service areas?

Community: How can we raise awareness when we don't have the services to respond to legitimate expectations?

How can we create more services without greater community support, and the resulting public demands to create funding and co-ordination which in turn depend on greater awareness?

Coordination:

Can we expect any increase in services without increased awareness and public demands to justify funding?

Are we building inevitable contradictions into the system by encouraging more and more service providers to develop protocols and programs for women who are battered, their children and their partners without first agreeing upon a uniform set of guiding principles?

Can we develop such principles without building on the wisdom of those front-line workers who have worked the longest with and for women who are battered?

Three Inter-Related Approaches to Prevention:

Entering the mainstream of discussions among people concerned with Wife Battering, the Ecological Perspective, Reshaping Values Approach, and the Community Development Model do not build incrementally on crisis services although they may incorporate them. However, they do build on a larger picture of our society, and from that larger picture, focus in on wife battering. As such, they embrace the complexity of the issue, and if effective, would address many other related sources of injustice and violence.

Building an Action Program for Prevention:

While no-one has a blueprint for the prevention of wife battering, through the gradual emergence of the above three perspectives, a number of ideas are gaining credibility which may provide the beginning for dialogue on an action program for prevention.

Briefing Notes:

There are specific issues, initiatives and options in the areas of:

- Incidence
- Primary prevention
- Coordinating committees
- The Role of the Justice System
- Women who are Doubly Isolated
- Sheltering
- Going Beyond Sheltering
- Programs for Men Who Batter
- Husband Abuse

WIFE BATTERING AND THE WEB OF HOPE: PROGRESS, DILEMMAS AND VISIONS OF PREVENTION

1. INTRODUCTION: A REVIEW OF OUR PROGRESS

The 1980's have been years of significant progress in the field of wife battering. Advances have been pronounced in the development of crisis intervention programs, in the growth of public awareness concerning wife battering, and in the widespread denouncement of violence against women in the home.

The number of emergency shelters serving battered women and their children has multiplied more than four times since 1979, from 71 shelters to over 300.* Canada was the first country in the world to institute nation-wide police charging policies against wife batterers. Many hospital, legal aid, and social service workers are developing or have developed protocols for dealing with the crisis of wife battering more effectively.

Government funding of emergency shelter spaces for battered women and their children has grown considerably at the federal level and in most provinces and territories. Judges are beginning to recognize the seriousness of wife battering and in some provinces have organized workshops to sensitize themselves to the experiences of battered women, to increase their knowledge of program options in the community and to consider the implications of this form of violence for the women, their children, the men who batter and the wider society.

Massive public education campaigns have been launched by several provincial governments. Transition house workers in most shelters have defined public education as one of their goals and speak frequently to diverse groups of community members. The media has also joined these efforts to alert people in Canada to the dangers and magnitude of the problem.

In addition, through widespread support for action which treats wife battering as a crime, Canadians have used the symbolic force of the law to express their repugnance towards wife battering. And with this expression has come increased demands that men who batter be made to take responsibility for their actions through criminal justice sanctions and through treatment programs. In support of these sentiments and demands, the number of treatment programs for men who batter has grown in a few short years from zero to over one hundred.

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* Included in this figure are: transition houses, second stage shelters, safe home networkds (where each network is counted as one emergency shelter), satellite houses, safe environments and multi-purpose emergency shelters. Totals for each type of shelter were provided by Provincial/Territorial Associations of Transition Houses.

This impressive progress in the crisis response to wife battering has brought international recognition to Canada and, for a time at least, has energized the crisis work of the communities of women and men working to reduce the impact and incidence of wife battering. But with progress, according to those women and men working to reduce the impact and incidence of wife battering, has come dilemmas.

2. THE DILEMMAS IMPLICIT IN PROGRESS

The insights summarized throughout this paper are taken from telephone and personal interviews with many people working with and for battered women and their children in Canada. Forty people working to help prevent wife battering, as front-line workers, policy makers, counsellors and advocates, were interviewed in the preparation of this paper. Their opinions and observations, as well as those of the many other people who have shared their wisdom with the author of this paper over the past few years, are the material on which this paper was based. According to many of these experts, the rapid progress in crisis responses to wife battering in the first half of this decade, has had several unanticipated consequences.

First, it has raised expectations among battered women, and among members of the general public, without providing services and results to meet these expectations. Many battered women, responding to widespread publicity in some areas for crisis lines and arrest policies, trusted that they had only to dial a number, and effective, efficient and above all sensitive support would be provided. They found that services available did not fit with the claims of the awareness programs, either in quantity or in quality. In addition there are indications that some members of the general public are looking at the relative longevity of government attention paid to this issue, as well as the massive public awareness campaigns launched in some parts of the country, and are concluding, that wife battering must be pretty well taken care of. They are mistaken, but in some communities, a few experts fear that this conclusion may be reducing community support for the continued needs of crisis and preventive services.

Second, rapid progress has created new service structures and, some speculate, an institutional mentality which resists the change necessary to build on our growing knowledge of wife battering. Even though many workers in crisis services in the early 1980's believed that their services were only stepping stones to a more wholistic approach to prevention and effective crisis intervention, there is now concern that some people working in the field have become so committed to the services they provide that they have lost some of the perspective and flexibility which is needed to change. Transition house workers in particular have been grappling with the question of whether or not their services are becoming too institutionalized. Critics have claimed that transition houses and other crisis services are now working primarily to perpetuate their services. While this claim is recognized generally as an extreme and unfair attack, many front-line workers are now wondering if they are meeting effectively the needs of battered women in our society.

Third, continuing progress has shown us that one-dimensional solutions will not prevent wife battering, and that progress will be slow. There are preliminary indications through research, that the aggressive charging policies adopted by police forces across the country are still not being widely implemented and that many abused women continue to be ambivalent about criminal justice intervention in their lives. There are no statistical indications that progress in launching and maintaining crisis programs has reduced wife battering in our society, although it must be remembered that this kind of success is very difficult to measure because with awareness comes higher reporting rates. Further, research still suggests that many traditional health, social and spiritual services are not doing much to help battered women. Women are still suffering the secondary victimization experienced when they look for help in institutions and agencies not sensitive to their problems.

However, there is now an understanding of the true enormity and complexity of the problem of wife abuse, and the recognition of the need for multifaceted approaches to reduce its incidence.

People working in the field now appreciate the breadth and depth of the roots of wife battering. Some are seeing daily evidence of direct and indirect links between wife abuse and other forms of violence within and outside the family. Research and first hand experience have shown that in families where there is wife abuse, there is a higher risk of child abuse. Similarly, front-line workers report that many battered women have also experienced sexual abuse. Some people working directly with teenage runaways or teenage prostitutes, feel that violence in the home contributes to the need of many teenagers to escape from their families, and may contribute to the low self esteem and desperation which characterizes many teenage prostitutes.

In addition to the complexity implicit in the possible links among so many forms of violence, definitions of wife battering have also become more complex. Wife battering can be expressed through emotional, physical, sexual and economic battering. The breadth of these definitions has led critics to ask what is not included in battering on the negative side of relationships? Some experts in the area have concluded that we can't productively separate wife battering from other forms of family violence and their effects, and that to appreciate the complex interrelationships, we must now deal with family violence as a whole.

But the growing awareness of the inter-relationships among so many forms of violence seems to have produced a perception of planning impotence among many government officials and front-line workers in their attempts to deal with the complexity of the problem. The problem has simply become too huge to handle for some. Many people working in the field are expressing the sentiment that unless we can effect massive structural change in our society we will never prevent violence. And because massive structural change seems impossible, their hope for prevention begins to diminish along with their ability to help plan and create concrete, innovative action alternatives.

In the attempt to deal with and understand the overwhelming enormity of the problem of preventing wife battering, many people working around wife battering have lost their direction. Many front-line people working in this area now

share the ambivalence and emotional confusion regarding solutions experienced by battered women. We have expanded our vision only to see that the issue is not as clear as we had once thought, and that the solutions are far from obvious and easy. As a society, we are living through the same dilemma of apparent choice experienced by battered women, where no choice has a clear outcome.

3. THE UNANTICIPATED CONSEQUENCES OF PROGRESS

The effects of expanded expectations and definitions have interacted with the signs of progress (e.g. increased funding, and public awareness) to produce several unanticipated consequences which contribute to the air of uncertainty concerning appropriate action in the area of wife battering.

For example, the growth in government funding, combined with raised expectations of services among battered women, and increased concern about the problem in the community, have produced a mushrooming of requests for new transition houses. Recently, in view of the multiplication of transition houses in the past decade, these continued demands for more houses have led to a questioning by government officials, and even among some transition house workers of how many shelters we really need, and of how much money we are willing to stream toward crisis services instead of toward prevention programs.

Another example, which may be evidence of an attempt to set aside the complexity of the issue and to look for clear, direct, and less ambitious solutions focussing on the crisis, is the apparent trend in government funding agencies to reject a shelter model which also provides outreach, preventive, follow-up and support services. This model, advocated by transition house workers for the better part of this decade, is based on the idea that the shelter, as a pivotal and readily identifiable service for battered women in the community, should become a focus of outreach, preventive and follow-up services for battered women and their children, in addition to providing emergency shelter. The recent federal government initiative, Project Haven, while welcomed for its potential support of emergency shelter units, was greeted with some disappointment by front-line groups because:

1. it didn't provide an absolute assurance of funding for rooms for additional services;
2. as a federal program, it could not fund badly needed support and follow-up services, which fall under provincial/territorial jurisdiction; and,
3. it could not provide an implicit recommendation or directive to provincial/territorial and municipal governments for extra funding for additional services.

Similarly, new funding formulae negotiated between transition house workers and government officials in some provinces, while providing greater security for the sheltering aspect of transition houses, tend to exclude provisions for support, follow-up, outreach and preventive programs including such services as:

- counselling and play therapy for children staying in the transition house;

- regular, high-quality child care;

- programs which bring teachers into the shelter to conduct classes for the children staying there, so they will not have to cope with a new school for the duration of their shelter stay;

- special self-esteem groups for battered women whether or not they are staying in a shelter;

- information and counselling service workers who travel to the women in the community, particularly in isolated and rural communities where transportation may be a problem;

- long-term counselling, referral and self-help groups to provide support for battered women and their children, and identification of escalating violence long after the woman has come to the house for help;

- public awareness programs which are funded well enough that extra staff can be allocated to this preventive work.

Some shelter workers believe that the failure of governments to fund support, follow-up, outreach and preventive services, is partly an attempt to reduce transition houses to hostels, and partly a loss of interest among some governments, in supporting concrete action to address wife battering. In some provinces, there seems to be a belief that shelters are surviving and growing, that police are laying charges, in fact, that we have, as a society, done all that can be done realistically to protect women who are battered.

4. THE UNEXPECTED CONTRADICTIONS IMPLICIT IN OUR PRACTICAL SOLUTIONS

Despite dissatisfaction with some of the action taken recently, there is little movement toward alternatives because of the uncertainty about the optimum direction for future action. This uncertainty is fuelled by a number of other unexpected contradictions implicit in the practical initiatives chosen to date.

One of the most obvious contradictions centers around police charging policies. As a society, we have stressed that wife battering is a crime, and police have been encouraged to lay charges when there is reasonable and probable evidence that an assault had taken place. And yet there is evidence that the majority of battered women, 70% according to a study using 1985 statistics, say they would not seriously consider using the criminal justice system themselves and 80% believed they would not use it in the future for the following reasons:

- they fear that if they report their battering to the police, their children will be apprehended by child welfare authorities.

- Some women, who have had previous contact with the criminal justice system feel the control they experienced at the hands of the criminal

justice system was worse than the control they experienced at the hands of their batterers.

- Others, who rely on their husbands' incomes for their support, fear that their husbands will leave them, or that a prison sentence or fine will rob the entire family of much-needed income.

- Still others want to keep the family together and fear that by calling in the police they will abandon all hopes of true reconciliation.

It should be noted that women are also ambivalent about approaching health or social service agencies for help for many of the same reasons. In the case of Aboriginals for example, using such services can result in individuals being removed from their cultural community. Faced with such a choice, victims learn not to report crimes or enter into some social or health services. It becomes a lose/lose proposition.

A related contradiction mentioned by some police is their fear that in our attempts to protect the women through more aggressive charging policies, we are in fact escalating the seriousness of the violence by contributing to the man's feelings of loss of control, and so may ultimately be increasing the number of homicides resulting from wife battering.

Another contradiction frequently mentioned is the clash between explicit attempts to encourage cooperation among different services through the rapid growth of community coordinating committees and the increase in competition among services for scarce funds, fostered by the provision of funding without accompanying programs to nurture interagency cooperation and communication.

Another dilemma affecting service delivery is whether to plan services which have the entire family as its base or its clientele, or to plan services which focus on the individual. Criminal justice based services tend to focus on the individual because individual responsibility is at the root of our criminal law system. But one of the criticisms of such services is that their focus isn't broad enough, that they can't see the context of the problem nor can they respond to the complexity of the needs of those living with wife battering. Yet, if we decide to stress the family unit as the starting point for program planning, how does this decision impact on individual rights and attribution of responsibility?

There is even contradiction built into our hope for prevention, for while much lip-service is paid to the ideal of prevention, funds for preventive services are not available across the country, and except in a few jurisdictions, planners and service workers are not even clear on whether they should address primary, secondary or tertiary prevention first, or if it is possible to simultaneously address all three.

Finally, there is the trend to replace people who have expertise and sensitivity to the issue with generic managers in government, social and health service and even front-line agencies and programs working to reduce the impact and incidence of family violence. This is a particularly serious problem, closely related to the increased bureaucratization of services for battered

women, mentioned earlier. It harbours the implicit contradiction that precisly at a time of great potential change, as we look toward prevention, when we may need continuity, sensitivity and expertise the most, we are throwing expertise away. There is concern that through this trend, which emphasizes objectivity and maximizes cost effectiveness, service delivery and standards of quality care have all been diluted. There is speculation that the massive denial of expertise, in particular practical, front-line expertise, and the resulting gap between the need for expertise and the expertise available, is at the root of a variety of service delivery contradictions.

5. THE QUESTIONS WHICH CHALLENGE OUR PROGRESS TO PREVENTION

These and many other unanticipated consequences and contradictions all seem to erect barriers to our common goal of prevention. A number of questions surround our attempts to move to the next stage of progress.

- Are we inadvertently imposing even more control over women and taking away their choices in our attempts to help them? For example, how are we affecting women's and children's lives by encouraging women to testify, when women will often agree to testify only because they hope they'll get help for their husbands, hope born of public education perhaps, when judges still aren't routinely insisting on treatment for the men to stop the violence and the programs are not available in any case (waiting lists, etc.)

- How can we work toward community-based solutions when not all communities accept that wife battering is a problem?

- How can we coordinate services within and across service areas?

- How can we protect the right of the individual to confidentiality and at the same time promote information sharing across agencies?

- Are we changing outward behaviour but not really affecting underlying values?

- How can we raise awareness when we don't have the services to respond to legitimate expectations?

- How can we create more services without greater community support, which in turn depends on greater awareness?

- Can we expect any increase in services without increased awareness and public demands to justify funding?

- Are we building inevitable contradictions into the system by encouraging more and more service providers to develop protocols and programs for battered women, their children and their spouses without first agreeing upon a uniform set of guiding principles, and without building on the wisdom of those front-line workers who have worked with and for battered women the longest?

6. THE WEB OF HOPE

In the face of these questions, most people trying to grapple with the issue of how we can move closer to our ultimate goal of prevention, feel caught in a web of conflicting hopes and contradictory information. Many concerned women and men are now wondering if our hopes for protection of the women, for long-term prevention, for support for the women and children, for programs which will help men take responsibility for their violence, will not all become contradictory when translated into action. Is the hope for effective crisis intervention in conflict with the hope for long-term prevention? Does the hope for greater freedom from fear for women in our society conflict with the hope to help keep families together? Does the hope for greater equality of women clash with the hope for greater rights for children?

Certainly this web of hope will not be untangled easily, but there <u>are</u> emerging perspectives which attempt to look at the issue of preventing wife battering from different angles, and embryonic ideas for prevention alternatives, which may help move us closer to our goal.

7. PERSPECTIVES ON PREVENTION

Three main inter-related perspectives are entering the mainstream of discussions among people concerned with wife battering. None of these build incrementally on crisis services, although they may incorporate crisis services. They build on a larger picture of our society, and from the larger picture, focus in on wife battering. As such, they each embrace the complexity of the issue, and if effective, would address many other related sources of injustice and violence.

7.1 The Ecological Perspective

This is an interactive perspective which focuses on relationships among individuals, communities, institutions and the larger environment and their influence on one another. The definition of mental health recently developed by Health and Welfare Canada, exemplifies this perspective. Under this definition, mental health is improved:

"· when the social and legal environments uphold human rights and restrain destructive behaviour;

· when a group acts to support an individual, or to create environmental conditions that are conducive to health;

· when individuals acquire skills and resources that enable them to meet

personal needs, contribute to communal life and improve the environment."[1]

Similar statements could be made replacing "mental health" with the "ability of women to live free from violence".

7.2 Reshaping Values

This perspective insists that to reduce violence we must not simply change behaviour. Instead we must examine behaviour to help identify values, but then attempt to change the underlying values as well as the behaviour. Thus, it is not enough to simply teach a batterer not to strike his wife, for he will turn his controlling behaviour to more subtle psychological forms. Similarly, we cannot counsel a woman that she has alternatives to living in a violent household, without changing the social values and service options that perpetuate violence against women. Within this perspective, the values of materialism, ownership, competitiveness, individualism, autonomy, and control would all have to be reduced by replacing them with cooperative values and accompanying action alternatives which stress interdependence, non-violence and collaboration.

7.3 Community Development

This perspective holds that effective prevention must be rooted in community-based programs, but that not all communities have the awareness of wife battering or the willingness to address the problem to make this goal feasible. Even more importantly, not all communities have the base of trust and solidarity which can make an integrated community program work. Therefore, the first step toward effective prevention, according to this perspective, necessarily involves community development. This development would not in most cases be focussed around wife battering. It would be accomplished by facilitating cooperation and coordination around an issue of concern to community members. Once networks for cooperation were established, the same networks could be used to address a variety of issues, including wife battering.

8. BUILDING AN ACTION PROGRAM FOR PREVENTION

While no-one has a blueprint for the prevention of wife battering, through the gradual emergence of the above three perspectives, a number of ideas are gaining credibility which may provide the beginning for dialogue on an action program for prevention. A cataloguing of these ideas follows.

8.1 Community Development

- Develop community-based education programs which rely on peer pressure and word of mouth.

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[1] p.7 Health and Welfare Canada, "Mental Health for Canadians: Striking a Balance," Supply and Services Canada, Ottawa, Canada, 1988.

- Identify, train and support facilitators for different peer networks including adolescents, young mothers at home, employees of different companies, union members, etc. to personally convey information about wife battering, provide support and refer people to appropriate services.

- Involve front-line service workers including members of grass roots groups to do community development.

- Launch community development programs to help re-create the sense of community which can make peer pressure against violence effective.

- As much as possible, include funding allocations to allow for the nurturing of communication among potentially competing groups, in general funding provided for wife battering programs.

- Broaden the concept of the victims of wife battering to demonstrate the devastating costs, both social and financial, of wife battering and other forms of family violence, to the community.

- Explore examples such as those found in some Aboriginal communities where Family Violence is dealt with as a community responsibility stressing reconciliation and communal responses, not adversarial and divisive models.

8.2 Changing Values

- Base prevention programs on a consistent set of values stressing non-violence, equality of women and men in relationships and throughout society, and inter-dependence rather than dependence in families.

- Work with child care facilities including day cares, schools, play groups, etc. to develop programs which actively attempt to modify values in order to stress non-violence, by dealing directly in all classroom and recess experiences with conflict resolution, justice and cooperation in relationships.

- A 1986 poll on the national mood disclosed a confirmation of traditional family values, and revealed that eight out of ten Canadians consider a good family life their most important goal, ranking even higher than their jobs, careers and religion.[2]

To support these values, create programs to reinforce a family policy which encourages families in which the adults are equal partners, in which family members have the potential for strong self-esteem and in which positive interdependence is possible rather than the types of emotional and economic dependence which lead to abuse of power and eventually, violence.

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[2] "MacLean's", Jan. 5, 1987.

- Teach people to think critically about for example, the socialization effect of pornography.

- Use the media as a vital tool to promote positive values for socialization.

- Within the education system, address and correct gender stereotyping whereby boys are taught to deal with problems through aggressivity and women through passivity.

8.3 Research

- Investigate how the majority of people exhibit non-violent behaviour. What factors contribute to non-violence in men and women?

- Investigate risk factors and precipitating factors associated with wife battering, realizing that such research will improve our understanding but will not necessarily provide solutions to the problem.

- Undertake research which looks at the long-term problems and experiences of women who make different choices. For example, what happens to women who go to shelters? What happens to women who choose to press charges?

8.4 Changing Service Perspectives

- Remove the batterer from the home to a secure treatment facility, rather than removing the women and children to an emergency shelter, but ensure that adequate support and crisis services for the women and children are not jeopardized by this shift.

- Look at different stages of intervention, including prevention, crisis/ protection, stabilization and integrated responses when designing services, research, training, system development or policy development.

- Recognize that children living in abusive homes need the knowledge that battering is a serious problem and need access to emergency and support services. For example, some people have suggested providing toll-free crisis lines for children and advertising these crisis lines on cereal boxes and milk cartons.

8.5 Prevention Through Individual Support

- Build an interdisciplinary approach in dealing with individual battered women, integrating employment, the administration of justice, education, housing and training agencies as well as counselling, health and social service agencies in helping each woman to plan her future.

- Ensure that treatment programs for men always have links with support services for women and children to ensure coordinated intervention for all family members.

- Provide follow-up support after the crisis not only for the battered woman but for the children and also for the batterer if he is willing to participate.

- Stress the development of strong self-esteem as the basic goal of all services for battered women, their children and their spouses.

9. CONCLUSION

Finding the answers to a global question like: "How Can we Prevent Wife Battering?" cannot be easy. It may even be impossible. Perhaps we will never design a unified approach to the prevention of wife battering, or to any other form of family violence. But with a common goal - prevention, and an agreement to always refer to the needs, experiences and hopes of the victim as a reality test for our plans, we may build prevention initiatives which will untangle our web of hope, reduce the contradictions in our accomplishments and bring us closer to a society free from violence.

10. FACT SHEET: WIFE BATTERING

INCIDENCE

10.1 Early Estimates of Incidence

The first national estimates of the incidence of wife battering in Canada were made in the early 1980's and were extremely discrepant.

- In 1980, Linda MacLeod, in a book entitled Wife Battering in Canada: The Vicious Circle, estimated that in each year, one in ten women in Canada are psychologically, physically or sexually battered by their husbands or live-in partners.

Although this figure was widely publicized at the time, Ms. MacLeod's estimate was criticized because it was not derived from a random sample of all women, but rather was extrapolated from the number of women who stayed at transition houses and women's emergency shelters, the number of women who filed for divorce on the grounds of cruelty and estimates of the proportion of battered women who need help but do not stay at transition houses.

- The Canadian Urban Victimization Survey which provided data based on a randomly selected telephone population, in seven cities, seemed to give credence to these criticisms. It estimated that for 1981, four out of every one thousand women (aged 16 or over) in seven cities were assaulted or sexually assaulted by a spouse or former spouse... a significantly lower estimate from that of Ms. MacLeod.

10.2 More Recent Estimates

Despite the considerable discrepancy between these two early estimates, people working directly with or for battered women claimed that even the ONE in TEN estimate was too low. More recent research tends to support this claim.

- Ms. MacLeod in a 1985 study, estimates that, one million women in Canada were battered by their husband or live-in partner in 1985.

- The All-Alberta Study on Wife Assault conducted by Les Kennedy at the University of Alberta in 1987, surveying 1,045 persons 18 years of age and older, either in person or by telephone, estimated that: the rate of husband to wife violence was 11.2 per 100 couples. This rate, like both Ms. MacLeod's rates included both psychological and physical violence. Severe violence (kicking, beating, using a weapon) occurred at a rate of 2.3 per 100 couples.

- Another study conducted by Dr. Eugene Lupri also at the University of Calgary, based on a self-administered drop-off questionnaire distributed to a national sample of 652 women and 471 men who were or had once been married or living with someone, found that in 1986, one man in ten committed at least one serious offense against his female partner which

would be considered chargeable assault if it occurred outside the home, i.e. kicked, bit, hit with a fist or object, beat up, threatened with or used a knife or a gun.

- Further, Dr. Lupri's study reveals that over ONE MILLION wives or female partners were abused physically by their husbands or partners in 1986.

10.3 U.S. Estimates

Estimates in the U.S. have always tended to be higher than Canadian estimates of battering.

- In one early study based on interviews with 2,000 families, 16% of the couples reported one or more violent incidents (Murray Straus, Behind Closed Doors, Doubleday, New York, 1980).

- In a more recent study by Straus, he estimated that 11.3% of the women in his sample reported at least one violent incident by their husbands against them in 1985 (p.187 R.L. McNeeley and Gloria Robinson-Simpson "The Truth about Domestic Violence Revisited: A Reply to Saunders" in Social Work, Mar-Apr., 1988).

10.4 Homicide Statistics

- In 1987, 15% of all homicides involved husbands killing wives (Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, Homicide Data Project, 1987).

11. BRIEFING NOTE: WIFE BATTERING

PRIMARY PREVENTION

11.1 The Context: Value Change and Prevention

The 1980's have seen significant progress in our society's response to the crisis of wife battering, through legislative change, nation-wide charging policies, the growth of emergency shelters, crisis intervention teams and other crisis-oriented initiatives.

But increasingly, women and men working with and for battered women, their spouses and their children are frustrated with the primary emphasis on the crisis characteristic of the considerable progress made to address wife battering in this decade. There is a general feeling that it is time now to turn our major attention to prevention, while ensuring effective crisis responses. And there is general agreement that any proposed solution to the problem of wife beating has to go beyond attempts to counsel and support women who are already battered and beyond programs to stop violent behaviour among men who already batter.

There is widespread consensus that to eliminate violence against women in the home, values and social structures which promote and condone violence, as well as values and social structures which emphasize the power of men over women and children must be identified and changed.

It is also accepted that we have been brought up with certain values and beliefs about relationships, marriage, the family and about being men and women. We have also been socialized to accept violence in some contexts and not in others. Although there have been some small changes in our values over the past few decades, historically men have been seen as "naturally" superior to women, and therefore as appropriate leaders of women and children. Accordingly, many of our values and institutions overtly or covertly support the "natural superiority of men" through the division of labour, through discrimination against women, and through a legal system which has often subtly excused violence against women, particularly if the man was "provoked", i.e. if his dominant position in the family was undermined or challenged.

Studies have shown that violence against women is still considered legitimate by many men in our society. For example:

- a study by James Check at York University, of the sexual attitudes of young males, found that one third would rape under certain circumstances and that one sixth think the best way to sexually excite a "cold" woman is to use a little violence.

- Fran P. Hoskin, editor of "Women's International Network News", states that violence against women exists in every society in the world where the male-headed family structure prevails.

- David Levinson found in a world-wide study that where physical punishment of children is relatively rare as a socialization technique, wife beating is also likely to be uncommon.

11.2 Orientation and Components of a Preventive Strategy

The following is an amalgamation of preventive strategies suggested by many writers and workers concerned with family violence. While primary prevention, that is, the prevention of violence before it occurs, is the ultimate goal of any prevention strategy, it is generally accepted that primary prevention cannot be effectively separated from secondary and tertiary prevention goals which attempt to stop the violence for women, men and children who have lived, or are currently living with battering.

11.2.1 Orientation of a Preventive Strategy

- An effective preventive strategy cannot focus only on the individual, nor can it focus only on the broader society. Instead, a comprehensive constellation of programs must be developed, aimed at the individual, the family, the community and at society as a whole.

- Preventive programs must recognize and respond to the complexity of and contradictions inherent in wife battering.
- Secondary and tertiary preventive programs must respond to the changing needs of the direct and indirect victims of battering at different stages in the changing process of battering.

- Preventive programs must include widespread attempts to increase the value of women and children in our society.

- Preventive programs must promote the self-esteem of women, children and men across society.

11.2.2 Components of a Preventive Strategy

- Public education which helps teach people non-violent options.

- Public education which raises awareness about wife battering and its social and economic costs.

- Curriculum development in primary and secondary schools.

- Course development in colleges and universities.

- Professional training of those professionals who work with people who are battered or who batter.

- Targetted awareness courses for people who do not work on the problem of wife battering but who come into contact with many people who are the victims or perpetrators of battering, e.g. employers.

- Targetted awareness programs for groups at high risk of battering or being battered e.g. teenagers, first-time parents. Research to better understand the roots of wife battering and those factors which may help trigger the violence.

- Programs directed at children living in violent homes.

- Residential treatment and counselling programs for violent young children.

- Follow-up programs for women who have been identified as battered women, their children and their spouses.

- Outreach programs to help identify people at risk and thereby prevent battering before it occurs, or before it escalates to severe violence.

- Self-esteem programs for women, children and men.

- Counselling and support services for battered women, for their children and for their spouses.

- Programs to protect the rights and promote the equality of women in our society, including, inter alia, employment, housing, health and child care programs.

11.3 Progress in Prevention

The number of programs aimed at preventing wife battering has multiplied in the past few years. The programs highlighted below are intended to give a picture of the diversity of initiatives which have been tried, not to give a comprehensive listing of all recent and current initiatives.

11.3.1 Public Education

- Alberta and Ontario have proclaimed November family violence prevention month.

- The Lyons Institute for Prevention of Family Violence has been established in Alberta to undertake public education and research in the areas of spousal, elder and child abuse. Money to support these efforts is raised primarily through yearly telethons.

- Ontario has launched an extensive public education campaign for several years on the theme of "wife assault...it's a crime", including media spots, posters in buses, subways and in public places as well as pamphlets which are available in such locations as grocery stores and liquor stores.

- A number of theatre groups including Catalyst Theatre in Edmonton, Tununiq Theatre in the N.W.T., and Le Theatre d'un Temps in Montreal, have developed and presented plays on the subject of wife battering in an attempt to promote social change.

11.3.2 Research

- The Quebec Association of Shelters for battered women has conducted research into sexual violence within marriage to show correlations among socialization, social values, pornography and violence.

11.3.3 Curriculum Development

- The Baha'i community has developed a nation-wide training curriculum for children which teaches them to be peaceful among themselves, in their playgroups, their families, at school and in their communities.

- The Lincoln County Board of Education in Ontario has developed a Kindergarten to Grade 12 curriculum to prevent child abuse, sexual assault and wife abuse.

- The Protestant School Board of Greater Montreal has incorporated family violence concerns into the social issues components of its program in both elementary and secondary grades.

11.3.4 Targeted Education

- The B'Nai Brith in Ontario sponsored the publication of an educational manual on domestic violence for use in high schools.

- The United Church produced a training kit to help church leaders and members support victims of wife battering and prevent violence.

- A manual for health care organizations in Newfoundland and Labrador has been developed by the Newfoundland Hospital and Nursing Home Association.

- The Alberta Council of Women's Shelters has coordinated the Teen Esteem Alberta Project in response to an alarming rate of violence in young people's relationships. The objective is to produce audiovisual and printed materials targetted at 13-18 year old women and men, their families and teachers, to promote healthy relationships, build self-esteem, self-reliance and increase awareness of wife-battering.

- Transition house workers in Nova Scotia are working with teachers to identify high school girls to do public education with their peers on wife battering and dating violence.

11.4 Are Preventive Programs Successful in Changing Values?

While there has been no comprehensive evaluation of changing values regarding wife battering across Canada, there are some indications that public education is having an effect.

Ontario's media campaign, according to polls conducted between October 1984 and December, 1985 indicate that:

- The percent of the population who believed it is always wrong for a man to hit his wife rose from 82% to 92%.

- The percent of the Ontario population who have difficulty feeling sorry for victims decreased from 57% to 47%.

- Understanding of the causes of wife assault increased. The percent who thought that wife assault is caused merely by arguments that get out of hand reduced from 78% to 63%.

11.5 Impediments to Further Progress in Prevention

- A widespread ideological commitment to prevention cannot be realized without ample financial and action support at federal/provincial/ territorial, municipal and community levels.

- There are not enough services for children and adolescents living in violent households.

- In 1985 there were no residential programs specifically for violent young children.

- Follow-up and outreach services are not recognized as essential program components to prevent violence from being repeated and to address violence in its early stages.

- Widespread social and value change is difficult and slow.

- Some of the professionals who deal with wife battering may have a vested interest in maintaining violence in our society to keep their jobs.

- Our economic and social structures award high values to competitiveness, individual autonomy, aggressiveness and control... all values which help condone and perpetuate violence.

12. FACT SHEET: WIFE BATTERING

COORDINATING COMMITTEES

12.1 The Need for Coordinating Committees

Research and front-line experience with wife battering have forcefully communicated the historic lack of coordination among different services for battered women, their children and their spouses. The secondary victimization suffered by battered women as a result of this fragmentation of service delivery has also been well documented. Women working with battered women have, since the mid-1970's, stressed the importance of community coordination to meet the varied needs of battered women in a consistent way that makes sense to battered women and helps them build lives free from violence.

12.2 The Growth of Coordinating Efforts

12.2.1 At the National Level

a) Government Committees

- The Federal Government has made efforts to promote coordination within the Federal Government and between federal and provincial/territorial governments.

- Within the federal government, there is an interdepartmental committee on family violence and different departments have set up intra-departmental committees. Federal departments have also made an effort to ensure that there is no duplication of effort in projects related to family violence, and have coordinated their submissions to Cabinet for funding.

- Status of Women Canada also organized and hosted annual meetings between 1984 and 1986, of the federal and provincial territorial Ministers Responsible for Status of Women to share information about programs both in existence and planned, concerning wife battering, between 1984 and 1986.

b) Non-Government Committees

- In 1988, the Interdisciplinary Project on Domestic Violence was formed to explore ways in which a group of national associations could work together to address the need for new and improved approaches to domestic violence. The following associations are involved: The Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police, Canadian Association of Social Workers, Canadian Bar Association, Canadian Hospital Association, Canadian Institute of Child Health, Canadian Medical Association, Canadian Nurse's Association, Canadian Psychological Association, Canadian Teachers' Federation and the Church Council on Justice and Corrections. The associations hope to develop joint principles or guidelines of inter-disciplinary professional practice concerning domestic violence and to

design and deliver a training model which will provide professionals with the knowledge and skills to improve their responses to domestic violence.

12.2.2 At the Provincial Level

- Some provinces have Interministerial Committees on Family Violence or on Wife Battering.

- Several provinces are involved in projects to facilitate the development of local coordinating committees. For example,

    - the government of Quebec has created policies which have led to the creation of about fifty "tables de concertation" across the province. These committees share information, coordinate resources, and in some cases even create protocols for action.

    - The Alberta Government has also sponsored a project in three northern communities to promote a coordinated, inter-agency approach to family violence.

    - The B.C. government is creating victim assistance programs across the province which will encourage an integrated response to wife assault.

12.2.3 At the Community Level

- Inter-agency coordinating committees now exist in most large urban centres and in many towns and some smaller communities across Canada.

- In a 1985 survey of transition house workers, almost 50% of the houses said that staff members participated in a multi-disciplinary community service advisory or planning group (p.104 MacLeod,Linda, Battered But Not Beaten).

- Most community-level coordinating committees are essentially information-sharing bodies, although some do have a long-range goal of using the committee structure to develop integrated protocols and to deal with actual cases of wife battering together.

- Not all committees have enduring, formal structures. In some cases committees form temporarily for a purpose, but then are disbanded. For example, in Saskatchewan, all women's groups who are or will be working on violence against women are participating in two planning strategy sessions to ensure that they won't be duplicating efforts and won't be competing for scarce resources.

12.3 Issues

Most coordinating committees, to date, are having difficulty getting beyond the information sharing stage. While commitment is frequently very high, the problem of translating discrepant ideologies and practices into coordinated action is proving difficult at present. Nonetheless, some groups like the

St. John's, Newfoundland Coordinating Committee, are working towards this goal in a concerted way. The St. John's group has a number of sub-committees which produce issue papers on given topics and then discuss them with the larger group. In this way the Committee hopes to move beyond a superficial reporting of activities to share insights and problems between disciplines and orientations.

13. BRIEFING NOTE: WIFE BATTERING

THE ROLE OF THE JUSTICE SYSTEM

13.1 Background

13.1.1 The Role of the Justice System in Wife Battering

During this decade, the justice system has taken a lead role in helping battered women in crisis. Criminal justice officials have responded to the demands of battered women and front-line workers to treat wife battering as a crime, and have acted decisively through legislation, procedures and training to meet this goal, as the sections which follow will demonstrate.

Through its initiatives, the justice system has attempted to accomplish three main goals regarding wife battering.

a. To protect battered women and their children.
b. To deter men from battering their wives.
c. To serve a symbolic and educative role denouncing wife battering.

Through its leadership role, the criminal justice system has made significant progress toward its third goal. It has used its symbolic function to clearly state our society's unwillingness to tolerate wife battering. This strong message has been applauded by women and men concerned with wife battering both within and outside Canada. However, research continues to reveal that criminal justice system initiatives have not been as successful at meeting the goals of protection and deterrence, despite multiple and varied approaches to address these goals. As a result of this limited success and the growing demand for multi-disciplinary, preventive programs in addition to effective crisis intervention, some ambivalence toward criminal justice interventions and particularly toward the continued leadership of the justice system in the development of programs related to wife battering has emerged, as Canadians move more decisively towards programs which stress prevention.

13.1.2 A Brief History of Justice System Responses to Wife Battering

- Canadian laws, as well as many attitudes and practices related to wife battering were adopted from values and traditions of eighteenth century England, which saw women and children as the property of men, and which gave men the right, even the obligation to control and correct their wives and children.

- Under the laws of that time a man was allowed to beat his wife as long as the stick he used was no thicker than his thumb.

- The law which actively gave husbands the right to physically correct their wives was not repealed in England until 1820. But still women had little legal recourse over their husband's brutality, despite changes to the law.

- Between 1909 and 1960, the Canadian Criminal Code contained a special offence of wife battering. However, under this offence, the victim had to demonstrate a greater degree of bodily harm than was required in cases of other types of assault.

- Further, although assault of one person by another, including assault of women by their husbands, has always been considered a crime in Canada, until this decade, violence against women in the home was rarely considered or treated as assault.

13.2 Recent Progress in the Justice Response to Wife Battering

13.2.1 Legislative Progress

- 1983: Sexual Assault legislation was changed so that a husband could be charged with raping his wife.

- 1983: Amendments were made to the Canada Evidence Act expanding the situations in which the wife, or husband could be compelled to give evidence against a spouse to include offences related to wife battering.

- Nov. 1987 and May 1988: The federal government proclaimed, in two parts, the Family Orders and Agreements Enforcement Assistance Act which enhances the capability of enforcing spousal and child support orders and agreements by allowing access to federal data banks and by the garnishment of federal monies owed to the debtor spouse. While this amendment is not related to wife battering directly, it may help give some battered women who wish to leave their husbands, the financial means to make this decision without suffering the violence of poverty.

- May 1988: The Victims of Crime Act was passed, giving all victims of crime, including victims of wife assault, a greater role in the criminal justice system through procedures and programs more sensitive to their needs.

13.2.2 Charging Policies

- Canada was the first country in the world to adopt nation-wide charging policies regarding wife battering.

- In July 1982, a letter was sent by the federal Solicitor General to the Executive of the Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police, requesting their support and cooperation in dealing with violence in the family and encouraging all police forces to lay charges.

- The RCMP developed a national charging policy in February, 1983.

- In conjunction with the federal Department of Justice, the federal Solicitor General issued guidelines for police and prosecutors in the NWT and Yukon in December, 1983.

Since 1982, all provincial/territorial governments have issued directives to the police and in most cases to Crown Attorneys as well, encouraging rigorous investigation and prosecution of wife assault cases. In most cases, police need not actually witness the violence but must have reasonable and probable grounds to assume that an assault took place.

13.2.3 Police Training has been Upgraded

- All Canadian police education and training centres now report that they include a segment on wife battering in their training courses for police recruits.

13.2.4 Improved Criminal Justice System Data Collection

- The RCMP and several provincial/territorial and municipal police departments have redesigned their statistics collection systems so that wife battering cases can be differentiated from other forms of assault and so outcome of case and demographic characteristics of the victim and suspect can be identified.

13.2.5 Efforts to Increase Fairness of Sentencing

- Designated Crown Attorney positions now exist in many jurisdictions to ensure that Crowns have training in wife battering.

- More judges are including treatment in sentence, at least in locations where programs exist for men who batter.

- In Newfoundland, the Provincial Association on Family Violence was asked to speak to the Provincial Judge's Association.

13.2.6 Court Options Expanded

- In 1984, Manitoba established a wife battering court with a special judge and one Crown attorney assigned to it to deal with cases where the batterer pleads not guilty and asks to be tried by judge alone.

- In Alberta, a trial coordination project was undertaken in 1986 to determine whether family or criminal courts are preferable for wife battering cases.

- In N.S., a family court has been granted the authority to deal with criminal assault charges punishable on summary conviction, laid under Section 245(b) of the Criminal Code.

- The Regina Prosecutions Unit also experimented with a project in which cases of wife battering were assigned special priority in order to shorten the time between arrest of the batterer and prosecution of the case.

- Newfoundland has a unified family court to provide more wholistic program delivery to battered women and their children. There are indications that a second one may be established in Cornerbrook.

13.2.7 Attempts to Improve Police Intervention

- The number of Police-based crisis intervention units has grown (see briefing note on Beyond Sheltering).

- Edmonton police have developed an innovative foot patrol program to reduce the incidence of family violence and other social problems.

- In Toronto, there has been an analysis of data on police injuries in domestic disturbances to develop more effective intervention strategies.

- The RCMP is developing a crime prevention project in the NWT to reduce family violence and substance abuse.

13.2.8 Correctional Services is Playing a Greater Role

- CSC has developed a training module concerning family violence to be incorporated in the living skills program for inmates.

- A training seminar for CSC staff was held to increase awareness of indicators and methods of breaking the cycle of family violence.

- A review of literature and existing programs on the identification, assessment, treatment and rehabilitation of offenders who have experienced or have been the aggressor in family violence, has been undertaken and a resource kit for field staff prepared.

- Three demonstration projects involving community faith groups have been funded, specifically addressing the reconciliation of families of offenders experiencing family violence.

13.3 ISSUES

Despite this considerable progress, there are many issues surrounding criminal justice intervention in wife battering cases. Some of the most common questions raised in the literature and by those interviewed for this briefing note follow.

1. Is the criminal justice system of use to women if it is not serving a noticeable deterrent function?

2. Is the law too blunt an instrument to deal with the complex problems of wife battering and other forms of family violence?

3. Should wife battering be treated like any other crime?

4. Will the existence of "softer" options, like pre-charge diversion to treatment programs, lead to the decriminalization of wife battering and a loss of public perception of the seriousness of wife battering?

5. Many women will not call the police for protection, because they fear that their children will be taken from them and they don't want to go through the court process. Is there some way the criminal justice system can help these women?

6. Many police officers still refuse to lay charges routinely in wife assault cases. They claim the women don't want them laid, or that it seems inappropriate. Should these officers be forced to lay charges through reprimands, or fines, or is their refusal a sign of greater sensitivity to the victim's needs?

7. Can the community be more involved in the justice system through community tribunals, customary justice, etc.?

8. Does the criminal justice system reinforce the value of violence by treating violence with state-controlled violence?

14. BRIEFING NOTE: WIFE BATTERING

THE SPECIAL CHALLENGES OF WOMEN WHO ARE DOUBLY ISOLATED

14.1 The Context

While all battered women face almost insurmountable obstacles in their attempts to create a life free from violence, there are some groups of women who face even greater barriers. These groups of women are virtually invisible, because they are doubly isolated, first by their battering, like all battered women, but second by linguistic, cultural, geographic, racial, physical or mental barriers. These barriers not only make it difficult for them to gain access to information or services. The same barriers can make them feel uncomfortable and alien even if they do come into contact with a service for battered women, precisely at a time when they need desperately to feel accepted and "at home". As a result, the same service which helps many battered women can actually harm these women by increasing their feelings of isolation and hopelessness, by leading to inappropriate interventions if the women's needs are misunderstood, and in many cases for immigrant women, by unintentionally ensuring their ostracism from their communities. The special obstacles facing four groups of doubly isolated women will be dealt with briefly in the summaries which follow.

14.2 Women in Rural and Isolated Areas

While many innovative attempts have been made to help battered women in rural and isolated areas, an effective solution remains elusive. The isolation and vastness of Canada's rural areas seems to thwart any solution. And the problems and needs of women in the far north are often very different from those of a woman living in a rural community in southern Canada. Nonetheless there are some problems that are quite common.

14.2.1 Main Problems rural and isolated women face

- There is no public transportation or it is very limited.
- Support services are few and far between.
- There are rarely enough paid or volunteer service providers to make the creation of new services viable in rural areas.
- Lack of anonymity makes it difficult for women to approach anyone for help, and once the violence escalates this same lack of anonymity makes it difficult for women to find a safe place to go where they will not be discovered by their husbands.
- Because there are so few local services, women must leave their home communities and go to a strange and unfamiliar setting to seek help, where they have no friends, no relatives to provide support during their time of crisis.

- Information dissemination tends to be slower in rural and isolated communities, and so public awareness about wife battering may be low and access to information limited.

- Women may feel that they can't go to the local doctor, lawyer or police officer, because these officials are friends of her husband.

- Many farm communities are currently experiencing an erosion of their economic structure and political power. This erosion contributes to the woman's feeling of helplessness.

- In the far north, women have only sporadic access to the court system.

- Women living in poor farm communities are unable to leave because they can't afford a bus fare to the next town.

- Poor communities can't afford to provide matching funds with provincial and federal contributions to create services.

- Illiteracy is higher in rural communities, and so some women may not be able to use written information even if it is available.

- Women who choose to leave their husbands find they must either leave their community altogether or return to their husbands because there are no long-term housing alternatives in their communities.

14.2.2 Existing Initiatives

a) Safe House Networks. These are generally made up of several private homes whose owners offer to put up battered women and their children for very brief periods of time until they can be transported to a transition house. Overall, safe houses have more critics than they have supporters. They are considered unsafe both for the women and the permanent occupants of the house because their location cannot be kept secret in a small community, some feel they are too personal and make the woman feel lonely for her own home. Safe homes receive no funding or very limited funding, and funding is provided for room and board only. Therefore critics have suggested that they exploit volunteers, and perpetuate the notion that all battered women need is a safe place to go.

b) Satellite Houses. Satellite houses are facilities which provide women with a place to stay until they can be transported to a transition house. While a satellite house may resemble a transition house physically, it is not funded for service provision. Besides the continuing problems of safety, funding and transportation, satellite house workers say that the idea that it should be possible to provide room and board without services, is ludicrous. Women who are in crisis, need counselling when they first come to the house, not in three days when they are taken to a transition house.

c) Hot Lines and Transportation Networks. Toll-free crisis lines are growing especially west of the Maritimes. However these services have

been criticised for raising expectations without providing needed services. In addition, transportation networks continue to be difficult to maintain because they depend on volunteers which are difficult to find in rural and isolated communities.

d) Multi-Purpose Resource Centers. These are services which provide shelter, counselling, referrals and support to women and men with a wide variety of problems. Despite the intention to make these centers multi-purpose, most resource centers have become transition houses essentially because the overwhelmingly predominate need in rural and isolated areas is for services for battered women.

e) Combined Emergency shelter and second-stage or longer-term housing. These shelters help to solve the chronic problem in rural areas of long-term housing alternatives. However, there are currently only three or four in Canada.

f) Self-Help and Mutual Aid Options. These are almost nonexistent. In the NWT there is a voluntary public education/advocacy group which provides counselling, advocacy and translation of material, and which matches women in crisis by telephone with other women who have been through the same experience. The creation of self-help groups is thwarted by the long distances people have to travel to meet.

14.2.3 Directions for the Future

There is general agreement that a radically new direction is needed to develop programming in rural and isolated areas. Community mobilization based on the creation of an awareness that the major problems of that community may be linked to wife battering is an idea that is growing in popularity. Through these links the support base will be broadened and strengthened because commitment will be not only to wife battering but to the other issues which capture the interest of community members. Natural community leaders would have to be convinced to support the initiative, and community perspectives, interests and social traditions would be used to build awareness and support. In rural communities prevention by necessity must be the primary focus, for effective crisis intervention can only come through widespread community support and pressure against the batterers.

14.3 Immigrant and Visible Minority Battered Women

14.3.1 Main Problems Immigrant and Visible Minority Women Face

- Linguistic isolation. Many immigrant and visible minority women do not speak one of Canada's two official languages, and so do not have access to information or to services.

- Many immigrant women have a very negative image of the police because they may come from a police state and so will not call the police for help.

- Immigrant women fear that they will be deported if they look for help.

- The cultural mores of some immigrant groups condone battering.

- By seeking outside help, the woman may risk ostracism from her community.

- Women with older boys may find they can't go to a shelter. Many shelters for battered women will not accept boys over 16. But immigrant women may not have friends with whom to leave their sons and so they can't leave.

- Because of linguistic and cultural isolation, immigrant women frequently cannot leave their immigrant communities nor the jobs that they have.

- Immigrant women may feel very fearful of services they don't understand.

- Immigrant women may be discriminated against because of their race, language or culture.

- Shelters and other services may not be aware of cultural or religious practices which are perceived as essential by immigrant women.

- Many immigrant women are financially dependent on their husbands.

- In many cultures, divorce or separation are not seen as acceptable solutions to marital conflict, no matter how severe.

- The organization and structure of immigrant families tend to leave immigrant women particularly vulnerable to wife abuse. For example, because the husband is usually the sponsor for additional family members, he is likely to bring in his family. She is cut off from her own family and their potential support.

- Immigrant women are usually very unaware of their legal rights.

- Some shelter workers are not sufficiently aware of immigration rules to reassure immigrant women and to counsel them appropriately.

14.3.2 Existing Initiatives

a) Counselling

- In Manitoba, the Immigrant Women's Association has just started providing counselling services for immigrant women.

b) Awareness

- In Saskatchewan, Secretary of State Canada has provided money to the Immigrant Women's Society to develop training for translators so that they will be more aware of wife battering issues, and translate facts and ideas about battering and available services more effectively to battered immigrant women.

- In Alberta, the Council of Women's Shelters has produced two language tape scripts for immigrant women and for official language minority women. These tapes include specific legal information, general information on family violence, social service information and information on immigration law. They will be translated into French, Spanish, Cantonese, Mandarin, Vietnamese, Cree and Slavy.

- In Edmonton there have also been cross-cultural workshops for shelter staff.

- Also in Alberta a survey has been conducted through immigrant serving agencies on immigrant women and family violence.

- The Mennonite Centre has sponsored a committee of spanish speaking women to do a video on family violence for Spanish women.

- In B.C., Women Against Violence Against Women has developed a series of pamphlets about violence against women in Mandarin, Punjabi, Hindi and Spanish.

c) Access to Services

- In Ontario, three centres have been established to provide trained interpreters for service organizations working in the area of wife assault in immigrant families. All are community based and operate out of Toronto, Thunder Bay and the Niagara region.

d) Shelters

- Most transition houses, even if they do not have someone on staff who speaks the language of the immigrant woman can find someone who can communicate with her. This is particularly true of European languages, but is more difficult for Asian or African languages.

- A few houses specifically for immigrant women have opened in Canada, but it is generally considered that special houses for immigrant women are not cost-effective except in a few large urban centers.

14.3.3 Directions for the Future

Very few immigrant women feel comfortable going to a transition house, or even using other social and health services. In several provinces, transition house workers report that immigrant women will not use their services. In communities where the immigrant population is not large enough to warrant lobbying for a special transition house for immigrant women, women are looking at the possibility of community "safe house networks" even in urban areas.

14.4 Official Language Minority Women

14.4.1 Main Problems Official Language Minority Women Face

- Official language minority women face linguistic isolation similar to that experienced by immigrant women.

- They also, in some communities, face some cultural isolation, particularly if their religion is different from the religion of community members who speak the majority language.

- In some provinces, official language minority women tend to be concentrated in small rural communities, and so they suffer the problems of isolation faced by rural women, but this isolation is compounded by the fact that if they leave their community they may not be understood. However, an informal survey of front-line workers in provinces across Canada revealed that this issue has not surfaced as a problem. For example, in Nova Scotia, french speaking women have been central in the development of two houses in areas with a significant francophone population. In New Brunswick, francophone women do not consider themselves part of a minority, but rather members of an equal language community. In Saskatchewan, francophone women tend to live in self-contained communities, and have not communicated a need for additional services.

14.4.2 Existing Initiatives

- Very little official work has been done because the special needs of official language minority women have not surfaced as a problem.

- In Manitoba, Secretary of State, Canada, is encouraging existing services to provide all services in French as well as English.

- In B.C., and many other provinces, there is generally at least one worker in each transition house who can speak french.

14.4.3 Directions for the Future

- It is unlikely that any programs will develop unless battered women who are members of official language minority groups lobby for additional services.

14.5 Disabled Women

14.5.1 Main Problems Disabled Women Face

- Disabled women often aren't believed when they report violence against themselves and particularly if they report sexual violence.

- Community services are not given funding on a regular basis to allow them to provide wheelchair access to women and men with disabilities which affect their mobility. For example, as of 1985, only 29% of transition

houses were wheel-chair accessible and only 12% reported having a staff member proficient in sign language (MacLeod, L. Battered But Not Beaten, p.28).

- Emergency shelters generally won't accept women with mental disabilities, psychological problems or addictions.

- Disabled women with children may be unable to use either public or special transportation for disabled people, because these special transportation services will not accept able-bodied children.

- The definition of wife battering often must be expanded for disabled women to include violence against disabled women by their caretakers who may not be related to the victim, but on whom the woman has a dependent and sometimes a live-in relationship.

- Deafness or spastic conditions are sometimes mistaken for retardation or chemical dependency by service providers. When this type of confusion occurs, the services offered to women with these disabilities may be extremely inappropriate, degrading, and sometimes even harmful.

14.5.2 Existing Initiatives

- Disabled women have just begun to lobby nationally for better access to services and information in the last few years.

- In 1983, Prime Minister Brian Mulroney proclaimed 1983-1992 the Decade of the Disabled.

- In December 1985, the federal government, through Secretary of State, Canada, announced a new federal strategy which committed more than $16 million in grants and contributions over five years to improve the status of disabled Canadians.

- DAWN (Disabled Women's Network) has recently completed a survey in which they asked members to report their experiences with violence.

  DAWN will release a position paper on violence in March or April, 1989.

- DAWN Canada also plans to look at accessibility to transition houses in 1989.

- In Alberta, DAWN and the Council of Women's Shelters are developing a proposal for a project on accessibility to services for disabled women, defined in terms of both physical access and the absence of value barriers.

- Vancouver Police Victim/Witness Training Manual includes a section on interviewing techniques especially for victims with special needs including the disabled.

14.5.3 Directions for the Future

- Existing services should be examined for their level of accessibility to women and men with a variety of disabilities.

- Audio tapes on wife battering should be developed for women with vision disabilities.

- More dramatic and widespread initiatives will have to await input from disabled women, who are just beginning to focus their attention on the special problems of disabled women and violence.

15. BRIEFING NOTE: WIFE BATTERING

SHELTERING

15.1 Background: The Importance of the Sheltering Movement

The primary need of battered women in crisis, is widely recognized to be protection from the violence. The first services developed specifically for battered women and their children in Canada, to meet this primary need, were shelters, called transition houses, created by small groups of concerned women, many of whom had direct life experience with wife battering.

Since 1972, when the first transition houses opened in British Columbia and Alberta, shelter workers have played a pivotal role in the development of public awareness and services for battered women and their children across Canada. Transition house workers were pioneers in bringing the reality of wife battering to public attention in the 1970's. Since then they have continued to educate the public and to advocate both for the right of all women to live free from violence and for the right of battered women to have adequate and appropriate protection, support and opportunities to live without fear of violence.

From the beginning of the shelter movement, transition house workers have provided more than just emergency shelter to battered women and their children. They have offered emotional support, counselling, referrals to other services, friendship networks and hope. Through their work and analysis, they have developed a valuable expertise which is action oriented and which reflects the battered women's points of view. Shelter workers have stressed the importance of coordination among community services, of adequate protection, and of follow-up and preventive services along with crisis services. This perspective has provided the basis for the development of more comprehensive service delivery for battered women and their children in Canada.

15.2 Sheltering Options

Sheltering options have grown over this decade to provide viable sheltering alternatives in rural and isolated areas and to respond to the longer term housing needs of women in an era of cost restraint. Five major types of shelters serving battered women exist across Canada today.

15.2.1 Transition Houses

Transition houses are temporary residences designed specifically for battered women and their children. Traditionally, transition houses have offered a unique service because they provide emotional support, lay counselling and referrals to other agencies when needed, in addition to basic shelter. Increasingly, transition house workers are also attempting to provide specialized counselling, support and follow-up programs for the women and children who stay with them, and to offer outreach and preventive programs to battered women who need help but choose not to stay in a shelter. On average, women can stay in a transition house up to a maximum of six weeks. However, the median stay is just over two weeks.

15.2.2 Safe Home Networks/Safe Environments

Safe home networks, or safe environments as they are called in Ontario, refer to emergency alternatives in rural and isolated areas which provide one or more of the following services: crisis lines, emergency transportation, outreach workers, and very short-term shelter (up to three days on average), usually in private homes.

15.2.3 Satellite Houses

This is another option developed for rural and isolated areas, currently used in the N.W.T., Alberta and Manitoba, which provides short-term emergency shelter (up to ten days on average) for battered women and their children, but in a residence physically similar to a transition house, rather than in private homes. Satellite houses essentially offer shelter only, and are linked to a transition house where they refer women who require additional services and/or longer term emergency shelter.

15.2.4 Emergency Shelters/Family Resource Centers

These are multi-purpose emergency shelters, used primarily in isolated areas, where small populations cannot support the creation of a variety of separate services. They may serve women and children only, or women, children and men. They may provide shelter for people experiencing a variety of problems ranging from wife battering to homelessness to mental disabilities to chemical abuse.

15.2.5 Second Stage Houses

Second Stage Houses were developed to provide secure accommodation with some support and referral services for battered women and their children who choose not to return to their husbands, but who require, a longer stay than transition houses were able to offer. The maximum stay in second stage houses can range from six months to two years.

15.3 The Growth of Shelters

15.3.1 The Sheltering Movement Has Grown in Numbers and Support

- The number of shelters for battered women has more than quadrupled since 1979 when there were 71 shelters to 308 today.

- Over the decade, there has been a significant overall increase in government financial support for emergency shelter spaces. The federal government, through CMHC has recently announced Project Haven, a funding project which will create 500 new "hostel units" in the next four years. The Alberta governnment last spring negotiated a new funding agreement, guaranteeing shelters 100% funding of basic shelter services. Ontario has negotiated a similar agreement guaranteeing 80% of essential services.

- Community support for shelters is increasing. In 1985, on average, 5% of the budgets of transition houses were provided by community agencies and

another 10% through donations by community members. Fewer shelters have to shut their doors now for lack of funds than they did in the early 1980's.

15.3.2 Shelters are strengthening their Provincial/Territorial and National Voices

- In September 1988, every province and territory except the N.W.T. had a provincial/territorial association of transition houses. Unfortunately, the Manitoba Committee on Wife Abuse has just been disbanded for lack of funds.

- In January 1987, representatives from all provincial/territorial transition house associations met and formed a Steering Committee to explore the potential for developing a National Organization of Transition Houses. This steering committee has since drafted a constitution, and a statement of principles, and hopes to launch the national organization at a conference of all transition houses across Canada in June 1989.

15.3.3 The Number of Shelters for Battered Women in Canada Today

According to an informal survey of provincial/territorial associations of transition houses, as of September, 1988, there were:

208 transition houses
33 safe home networks/safe environments
14 satellite houses
30 multipurpose emergency shelters
23 second stage houses

or a total of 308 shelters serving battered women across Canada.

15.4 Issues: Through the Eyes of Shelter Workers: Current Threats to the Sheltering Movement

15.4.1 Funding

Despite an overall increase in the level of funding provided for emergency shelter spaces, funding continues to be a perennial problem for shelters for the following reasons.

- Funding is based on occupancy rates even though house overhead doesn't change appreciably with occupancy rates.

- Cost-sharing formulae penalize houses in provinces without the wealth or ideological commitment to provide their share of funding.

- The expectation built into funding formulae that the community will contribute a portion of funds needed joepardizes the survival of houses in poorer provinces.

- While overall funding for emergency shelter spaces has increased, government support for counselling, child care, follow-up and preventive services run by transition house workers is almost non-existent, and in some provinces has decreased. Even where governments recognize the need for such services, they often fund mainstream social and health agencies to provide them.

- Funding formulae rarely pay adequate attention to the desperately low salaries of shelter workers. (In 1985, full-time crisis workers earned $16,000 on average).

- Funding of shelters does not extend to funding for provincial/territorial associations of shelters.

- Existing funding practices encourage competition among shelters and among services which should work cooperatively.

15.4.2 Increasing Bureaucratization

- Some front-line workers fear that the increasing bureaucratic demands of government funders, combined with funding regulations which do not stipulate standards for the treatment of battered women, may be contributing to the replacement of grass-roots shelter workers with extensive practical experience of wife abuse, by workers who often have more professional credentials and who may better understand the bureaucratic demands of mainstream social service and/or health service delivery, but who may not have a sufficient practical knowledge of wife battering.

- There is also a fear by some that increasing bureaucratization is promoting a shift to a more hierarchical staff structure in shelters, more reliance on appointments, rules, efficiency and cost-effectiveness, which may reduce sensitivity to the needs of the battered women.

15.4.3 Lack of Appreciation of the Expertise of Shelter Workers

- Even though shelter workers have the most continuous, direct and practical knowledge of wife battering of any group in the country, they are rarely consulted by governments in the planning and implementation of programs for battered women.

- Increasingly, through funding cuts and growing bureaucratization, the transition house workers who began and supported the movement through its growth are being forced out.

15.5 Concerns for the Future/Concluding Questions

1. Will the shelter movement be absorbed into social services?
2. Will cost effectiveness replace concern for battered women?
3. Will the expertise of shelter workers be lost?

4. Will the vital service component of transition houses be transferred to other agencies without the knowledge of the needs and experiences of battered women?
5. Will the crisis needs of battered women no longer be served?

16. BRIEFING NOTE: WIFE BATTERING

BEYOND SHELTERING

16.1 Background

As our understanding of the complexity of wife battering grows, so does the recognition that a wide range of services including preventive, follow-up, support and sheltering services, provided by a variety of professional and lay community members, are needed to address wife battering. Despite this recognition, the majority of services which have been developed across Canada have focussed on the crisis, and emergency shelters for battered women have remained the major service available in most communities beyond police intervention, to respond to the needs of battered women and their children.

16.2 The Need for a Broad Service Base

Perhaps because transition house workers and criminal justice officials have taken such a strong leadership role in service provision for battered women and their children, the provision of services beyond sheltering has still fallen primarily to these two groups of workers. Even though battered women frequently reach out first to ministers, priests or rabbis, doctors and psychologists or social workers, traditionally these professionals have not met the needs of battered women. Only recently have health, spiritual and social service professionals begun to increase their awareness about wife battering and to provide more appropriate responses to women who come to them for help.

This situation appears even more untenable when we recognize that:

- As early as 1980, the need for health and social service professionals to play a more active and sensitive role in dealing with battered women was recognized and recommended. For example, the Standing Committee on Health, Welfare and Social Affairs of the House of Commons, in its 1982 report on wife battering, noted that some professionals do not elicit information about the beating, some do not believe the information when it is given and some tend to blame the victim for provoking the violence.

- Battered women often reach out to health professionals first since they frequently require medical attention for their injuries. "Between 60% and 80% of assaulted women seek professional medical care, thus the health care system is a crucial point in the identification of abuse and the prevention of further abuse" (p.2 Drs. Ghent, DaSilva and Farren, "Family Violence Guidelines for Recognition and Management", The Canadian Medical Association, Ottawa, Ontario).

- Research indicates that existing health and social services have actually been harmful for some battered women. Paula Caplan, author of an Ontario study on battered women who had received therapy from traditional and feminist therapists found that traditional therapists actually made women feel more depressed and helpless.

16.3 Progress: The Increased Involvement of Health, Spiritual and Social Service Professionals

Although progress has been slow, more and more health, spiritual and social service professionals are now beginning to reassure battered women that battering is not their fault and are referring battered women to transition houses and other appropriate services, where they exist.

- In a national survey of transition houses conducted in 1985, 75% of the shelter workers reported a greatly improved or somewhat improved relationship with spiritual organizations, 70% gave the same responses for hospitals and public health nurses (p.103 MacLeod, Linda Battered But Not Beaten).

These improved relationships have been promoted through the development of three main types of services:

1. The development of health service protocols in hospitals to better meet the health-related needs of battered women.
2. The creation of more professionally-run counselling programs geared specifically to battered women, and their children.
3. Varied initiatives taken by spiritual communities.

A brief review of some examples of innovative initiatives in each of these three types of service follows.

16.3.1 Health Service Protocols

- Hospitals in over half the provinces/territories have developed protocols to help staff provide sensitive, thorough assistance to battered women and their children.

- Public health nurses are also developing protocols in some locations. In Athabasca Alberta for example, the Athabasca Health Unit offers crisis intervention and public health nurses visit and/or detect cases of abuse or suspected abuse of children, women and elders.

16.3.2 Counselling Services

- EVOLVE in Winnipeg offers opportunities for specialized, intensive training in wife assault counselling for both victims and perpetrators.

- Family Services of Winnipeg, Inc. provides counselling and follow-up questionnaires to assess the effectiveness of their services for battered women and to keep in touch with these women so that they can get help if violence recurs.

- The Greater Montreal Social Services Centre provides feminist support groups for battered women.

- A coordinated assessment, diagnosis and intervention program for children staying in shelters has been developed by a psychologist in Calgary.

- More and more psychologists across Canada are beginning to offer counselling workshops for battered women which emphasize a wholistic approach to the problem.

- The Red Deer Regional Health Care Centre conducts therapy groups for victims of various problems including wife abuse. The program is multi-disciplinary.

16.3.3 Services provided by the Spiritual Community

- Baha'i members offer counselling for those experiencing family violence in 350 communities across Canada.

- Catholic Family Services provides direct and indirect counselling and support services for victims.

- The Salvation Army runs a victim-witness program in London, Ontario and between 75% and 80% of its clients are victims of family violence.

- Through Samaritan House in Brandon, Manitoba, a United Church Minister offers second stage housing and support services.

- The United Church has developed a kit on family violence for use by its congregations.

- The Church Council on Justice and Corrections will release a multi-media kit on patriarachy and family violence in the spring of 1989.

16.4 Progress: Follow-up and Support Services Offered by Shelters

Despite the fact that shelters are not funded to provide follow-up and support services, many shelters are providing such services simply because they do not exist in the community.

- Prelude House in Laval Quebec offers home visits, help overcoming day-to-day problems, and pairs each woman with a "buddy" when she leaves the shelter to provide ongoing support.

- Hiatus House in Windsor, Ontario offers a ten week cycle of group counselling for women whether or not they have stayed at Hiatus House.

- Transition House in St. John's, Newfoundland, provides a variety of follow-up programs for children and adolescents who have stayed with their mothers at the shelter. Resident and ex-resident adolescents wrote and acted in a short video about family violence. The house has also sponsored a grass-roots organization for young people called Teen Network, which will operate a volunteer drop-in service for other ex-resident teens.

- Tearman Society for Battered Women in N.S. provides continued support through an innovative volunteer network. Each woman who wants to participate is paired with a volunteer who is responsible for giving her

support, helping her keep appointments, etc. The house also has a weekly meeting at a local women's centre for women who are victims of violence.

- In Melfort, Saskatchewan, battered women can keep coming to the day centre for support and counselling, whether or not they have stayed at the shelter part of the program. A self-help group is also available. Staff members visit women living out of town.

16.5 Progress: Community Support Groups

In many communities, survivors of wife battering and other interested community members have created support groups for battered women. For example:

- MUMS was formed in 1984 by a group of women who had taken shelter at Bryony House in Halifax, N.S. to offer emergency telephone counselling to abused women with housing problems, women still living with their partners who want support and women who have been turned out of their homes.

- Helping Cther Women was formed in October 1985 by residents of Chrysalis House, a transition house in Kentville, N.S. This group provides emotional and referral support to women, shares information and networks.

- In the NWT,a self-help and crisis service called People Who Want A Better Life has been created. It has two part-time counsellors and once a week, members discuss and share experiences and feelings.

- In Manitoba, Women's Health Interaction, a small group of volunteers, creates networks and self-help groups for women.

16.6 Progress: Increase in the Number of Crisis Intervention Teams

Crisis intervention teams, although they concentrate on the crisis response, bring together community members to work with the police or to work independently to support battered women in crisis. Through this support, the awareness of the community is raised and women are given the added support of knowing that the community is behind them.

- There are currently at least ten crisis intervention teams in Canada. They are located in Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Ontario, Quebec and New Brunswick.

- The crisis intervention team in Restigouche, New Brunswick is run almost entirely by volunteers. It is made up of three volunteer intervenors at any one time and a coordinator. If the police phone and request that the team go to the scene of the crisis, the team will comply, but generally they provide follow-up support and referral for victims after the police have dealt with the immediate crisis.

16.7 Issues Impeding Further Progress

1. Transition houses in most communities are still being expected to fill identified service needs of battered women and their children. While the expertise of transition house workers should be given recognition and respect, the prevention of wife battering depends on a broad base of community members taking ownership of the issue.

2. Family doctors must recognize and respond to the crucial identification and support role they can play.

17. BRIEFING NOTE: WIFE BATTERING

PROGRAMS FOR MEN WHO BATTER

17.1 Background: A Brief History

The first programs aimed at reducing violence against women in the home by directing counselling and support to men who batter, developed in the United States in the late 1970's. In 1980 and 1981, the first programs began in Canada, and were located in Toronto, Vancouver, and London, Ontario. These groups started in response to the growing pressure from women's organizations for programs which: recognize the complexity of the problem of wife battering, which are geared to prevention as well as crisis management and which clearly communicate the man's responsibility for his violence as well as the unacceptability of violence against women.

Since 1980, the number of programs for men who batter in Canada, has grown to about one hundred. In addition, support for such programs has increased, among transition house workers and other front-line workers, among policy makers and battered women, although this support is tempered with some reservations. While most people working on the problem of wife battering are concerned that we still do not know whether or not programs for batterers are really effective, most feel that it is essential that we direct programs at batterers if we are ever to successfully reduce wife battering in our society. In one study of battered women in P.E.I., 91% of the women interviewed said that professional help for their assailants was an important need for them (Meredith and Conway, "Summary Report for the P.E.I. Committee on Victim Assistance", 1984). In a national study of transition house workers, 81% of shelter workers felt that more battered women would want police to lay charges if they knew that the man would be ordered to get special treatment (MacLeod, Battered But not Beaten, 1987). Overall, most battered women want help for their batterers. In addition, the broad base of referrals to these programs suggests wide acceptance of programs for men who batter. Facilitators of these programs report that they receive referrals and requests for information from churches, family services, military bases, shelters for battered women, doctors and employers.

17.2 Description of the Programs

There is wide variation in the location and orientation of men's groups across Canada. Some programs are located within correctional institutions and serve only offenders, other groups accept court-mandated offenders as well as men who come to the group voluntarily, in still others, attendance is purely on a voluntary basis. Most are free, but where there are charges, they are usually adjusted to ability to pay. In terms of orientation, the groups span a continuum from traditional therapeutic models which stress individual behaviour change to social change models which attempt to change values as well as behaviour and which stress the social roots of violence.

Despite these variations, a profile of programs for batterers in Canada has been developed through a national survey of programs for men who batter, conducted by the Canadian Council on Social Development in 1988:

- The vast majority of men attend these groups because they are afraid they will lose their wives or because they are under court order to attend;

- despite the urging of women's groups to stress the social roots of violence in any attempt to prevent violence, most of the programs take a therapeutic approach, which concentrates on the individual, and stresses anger and stress management, rather than the social roots of the problem;

- most of the facilitators are mental health professionals;

- almost all groups refuse applicants who abuse alcohol or drugs;

- most programs are 12-16 weeks in duration;

- there is virtually no follow-up or precise evaluation of the program;

- where there is an attempt to evaluate the effectiveness of the program, effectiveness is often equated with the absence of physical violence over a given period of time, and continued or escalating psychological and verbal abuse are not considered;

- while the men's partners are usually contacted at the beginning of the program, on average, there is no consistent contact with the women during the course of the program;

- few of the groups maintain contact with transition houses where the partners of the men in the program may be staying.

17.3 Changing Directions

There is evidence of frustration with the therapeutic model among some facilitators of programs for men who batter and among some men and women interested in starting new groups. These critics of programs which emphasize individual change without also addressing the social roots of battering, stress several common principles which they see as essential components in a group which can actually hope to reduce physical, sexual, psychological, economic and verbal violence against women:

- Men who batter are responsible for their actions and should take responsibility for their violence.

- Most batterers will not change their violent behaviour without some outside pressure and guidance.

- Violence, and particularly male violence is accepted in our society in all but its most extreme forms. Therefore, any attempt to stop wife battering must address the social values which support violence in our society.

- Violence is learned behaviour.

- Abuse is one tool that men use to ensure that women do what men want them to do. Men batter for control.

- Underlying attitudes which give rise to battering must be changed or else one form of violence will just be replaced by another.

- Women must be taught that while they are not responsible for the violence against them, they are responsible for their own safety.

- Programs for men should be part of a broader community intervention, and at least should be linked with programs for women. Wherever possible, these programs should develop in parallel with counselling groups for women, and with groups for children.

- Peer support groups for group facilitators are important.

17.4 Characteristics of Men Who Batter

- 50 to 70% either witnessed their father batter their mother and/or were themselves victims of abuse as children.

- Batterers come from all ages, races, classes, religious groups, professions, and have various psychological diagnoses.

- Batterers almost always minimize the severity and frequency of their violence.

- Batterers generally blame someone (their wife, boss, the kids) or something (alcohol, drugs, stress) besides themselves.

- Many, but not all men who batter are impulsive, and move, change jobs etc., without considering the consequences.

- Batterers are generally highly dependent on and very possessive of their wives.

- Batterers are often very isolated and alone, but this isolation tends to be self-imposed.

- Many have alcohol and/or drug abuse problems, but counsellors generally stress that these problems are not the cause of the battering.

- Most men who batter don't seek help voluntarily.

(These characteristics were taken from p.47 Joanne Dunaway, "Wife Assault/ Victim Support Worker Handbook", Justice Institute, B.C., 1987.)

17.5 Issues

1. Do these programs work? There is widespread agreement that co-ordinated and universal evaluation of programs for men who batter is essential. Most people interested in these programs would agree

that such evaluations should address behaviour and value change and should look at verbal and psychological violence as well as at physical and sexual violence.

2. Will money used to fund programs for men, divert needed resources from programs for battered women?

3. Do these programs cause more problems than they solve? For example, research shows that women may become more violent as the man's violence decreases, and some women unexpectedly experience cessation of battering as an even greater lack of attention, especially when they find that the absence of violence doesn't make the man the mate they want.

4. Are these programs misused by criminal justice officials?
e.g. If a man is in the program on a court order, some probation officers will allow him to drop out midway in the program if he has attended a few sessions and so has shown good faith.

5. Are groups less successful for men who have difficulty verbalizing their feelings?

6. What are the implications of transition houses running programs for batterers? An increasing number of boards of transition houses are interested in the shelters starting such programs because no one else is initiating programs.

7. Do such programs divert attention from other ways of dealing with batterers, e.g. removing them from their homes?

8. Do such programs perpetuate wife battering by easing the batterers' feelings of guilt and even by helping him express his violence in more socially acceptable ways?

9. Do these programs provide an "easy out" for batterers?

10. Should court-mandated treatment be pre-sentence or post-sentence?

11. Does the woman's faith in such groups prolong her own process of finding ways to stop or escape the violence, by giving credibility to her hope that the man might change?

17.6 Future Directions

Many people working with battered women and with men who batter, feel that to effect change, the deep roots of violence against women must be addressed. In particular, two themes have been stressed repeatedly by those interviewed in the preparation of this briefing note.

1. To reduce wife battering, we must start reinforcing new roles for men based less on competition and violence and more on cooperation and sharing.

2. Batterers and all men must be taught to unlearn the rigidity, domination and control so many men associate with manhood.

18. FACT SHEET: WIFE BATTERING

HUSBAND ABUSE

18.1 Introduction

Possibly no other issue related to family violence has received so much media attention and has generated as much controversy as the debate over the prevalence and seriousness of husband abuse. A brief summary of the debate and existing knowledge on this form of family violence follows.

18.2 The Debate

18.2.1 Husband Abuse is a Serious Problem

- There are a number of people in Canada who claim "it is a gross error to conceptualize and classify spousal violence as a woman's issue rather than a human issue. Conceptualizing domestic violence as a human problem reinforces in everyone's awareness that the problem should be everyone's concern and that everyone needs to be involved to eradicate the problem." (p.184 McNeeley and Robinson-Simpson "The Truth About Domestic Violence Revisited: A Reply to Saunders" in Social Work, Mar/April, 1988).

- This same group frequently argues that by focusing only on wife battering, we are discriminating against men and abandoning them to their victimization.

18.2.2 Husband Assault May Exist but it is a far less serious problem than is wife battering

- Proponents of this view argue that while undoubtedly there are men who are assaulted by their wives, husband abuse is far less serious than wife battering because:

  a. it occurs so much less frequently;
  b. when violence against men does occur, it is often an act of self-defence by women who have been abused by their husbands for years, or an attempt to protect children;
  c. men have more options than women to leave a violent relationship because they have less responsibility for the children and generally have more money, more economic stability and more job opportunities;
  d. violence against a man by his wife is an act which is not supported by social norms and institutions, while wife battering occurs in the context of overt and covert norms, laws and beliefs which condone, excuse and perpetuate violence against women. As a result, men do not experience the same helplessness that battered women experience.

18.3 Supporting Research

18.3.1 Husband Abuse is a Serious Problem

- 1977: Susan Steinmetz in an article "The Battered Husband Syndrome", published in Victimology, 1977-78, 2(3-4) p.499-509, argued that husband abuse is not uncommon and may even occur as frequently as wife battering. However she suggests that we know less about this form of violence, because men,in an attempt to live up to common myths about men's strength and their role as head of the family, and also to protect their attachments to their children,tend to ignore the violence, dismiss it, or treat it with selective inattention. Their reporting rates are therefore low.

- A recent survey, involving 1200 Edmonton families, done by Dr. Robert Bland, an Alberta psychiatrist, showed that more women admitted to hitting or throwing things at their spouses than did men (Alberta Report, 1985, 12(17), p.53.).

- A study by Wolfgang in the U.S. showed equal rates of spousal homicide for husbands and wives (p.179 Saunders, Daniel G. "Other 'truths' about Domestic Violence" Social Work Spring, 1988,Volume 33 #2).

- Gelles found that when we look at violence which occurs at least once every two months, 5% of both husbands and wives had been victimized by their spouses (McNeeley, Robinson-Simpson, "The Truth About Domestic Violence Revisited: A Reply to Saunders" in Social Work, March/April 1988).

- Strauss also found through a national survey involving 3,250 couples in the U.S.,that frequency of violence is almost equal for women and men victims. He found that men batter women on average 1.7 times a year, whereas women batter men on average 1.4 times a year (p.187 McNeeley and Robinson-Simpson).

- The National Crime Survey in the U.S. found that women are more likely to use a knife or a gun in a domestic dispute (34% of women compared to 22% of men) (p.180 Saunders).

18.3.2 Husband Abuse Exists But it is Not as Serious as Wife Battering

- Wolfgang's study, which showed equal rates of homicide for husbands and wives also showed that in 60% of the cases in which wives killed husbands, the women were responding to violence against themselves or another family member (p.179 Saunders).

- The National Crime Survey data in the U.S. found that one man was hospitalized for every 46 women as a result of domestic disputes (p.180 Saunders).

- The same survey found that 74% of the serious assaults by women are in response to attacks by their partners (p.180 Saunders).

- National Crime Survey data also indicates that there are NOT substantial differences between the sexes in terms of their willingness to report violence. 54% of the women and 45% of the men stated that they reported their victimization to the police. Therefore the lower incidence of husband abuse cannot be explained in terms of lower reporting rates.

- In Canada in 1987, of all homicides, 6% involved wives killing their husbands, but 15% involved husbands killing their wives (Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics Homicide Data Project, 1987).

- Dobash and Dobash, found that only 1.1% of violence in the home is husband assault, and that most women who resort to counterviolence do so after many years of enduring assault.

- A study of calls for help to the Hamilton, Ontario police made by Dr. Jack Byles showed women to be the victims of 95% of the calls.

- Dr. Pat Kincaid, in a study of Toronto family court records, showed that 95% of the assaults were against women (p.3 Joanne Dunaway: "Wife Assault/Victim Support Worker Handbook").

- Research also shows that wife battering affects the self esteem and perception of life options for women, but does not have the same far-reaching psychological effects on men.

PEOPLE INTERVIEWED IN THE PREPARATION OF THIS DOCUMENT

The list which follows is not as exhaustive as I would have wished. However time constraints and difficulties contacting people within the time period made some gaps in representation inevitable. You may be reassured however, that I did call upon my knowledge of the situation in the provinces/territories not directly represented in this list, and in particular I made use of interviews I completed with people in these regions for a series of speeches I made during Fall 1988.

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